

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PALERM 00491 151558Z
ACTION SIG-03

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-----105361 151612Z /47/17
P 150848Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL PALERMO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2472
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

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FI-CHANNEL FOR THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR FROM LINE PALERMO VICE ROME

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASIG
SUBJECT: INSPECTION OF POSTS IN ITALY: PALERMO

1. FOLLOWING IS POST MEMORANDUM FOR AMCONGEN PALERMO AS REQUESTED
PARA III-A OF INSPECTION INSTRUCTIONS AS QUALIFIED BY SPECIAL
GUIDANCE
FOR CONSTITUENT POSTS.

IN SPIRIT OF KEEPING THINGS "SIMPLE AND SHORT", I WOULD SUBMIT THAT
POST RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND WITH SICILY'S POLITICAL,
ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LEADERSHIP AND WITH THE ISLANDS'S POPULATION IN
GERERAL ARE POSITIVE AND PRODUCTIVE. WE ALSO HAVE NO MAJOR CURRENT
PROBLEMS IN OUR PRIMARY FIELDS OF SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSIBILITY:
CONSULAR SERVICES, POLITICAL REPORTING AND REPRESENTATION, TRADE
PROMOTION AND ECONOMIC REPORTING, INFORMATION AND CULTURAL
PROGRAMMING. WITHIN THIS OVERALL ASSESSMENT, THERE ARE OF COURSE
VARIATIONS, STRONGPOINTS (AND OTHERWISE) IN SPECIFIC AREAS, AND
OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRODUCTIVE CHANGE; BUT WE BELIEVE THESE CAN BE
MORE USEFULLY DISCUSSED WITH THE INSPECTORS WHEN ADDRESSING THE
INSPECTION QUESTIONNAIRE AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL.
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PAGE 02 PALERM 00491 151558Z

2. THE CONSULATE GENERAL DOES HAVE TWO MAJOR ADMINISTRATIVE PRO-
BLEMS, HOWEVER:
OUR PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERN HAS BEEN, AND REMAINS,
THE SEARCH FOR NEW OFFICE QUESTERS IN A CITY WHERE AVAILABILITIES
ARE VERY LIMITED, LANDLORDS RANGE FROM THE MAFIOSO TO THE MERELY
USURIOUS, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SHORTCOMINGS POSE PROBLEMS

FOR OUR CLIENTELE AND STAFF, A SEARCH IN WHICH WE ARE ALSO SEVERELY LIMITED BY LEGITIMATE SECURITY CONCENS AND BY THE FACT THAT SUITABLE SPACE CAN BE RENTED ONLY NOT PURCHASED. THE PLAY OF THESE VARIOUS FACTORS AND REQUIREMENTS HAS FORCED US SINCE OUR LAST INSPECTION LOCATE, NEGOTIATE, DO INTERIOR DESIGNING, ETC. ON THREE DISTINCT SETS OF OFFICE-SPACE ALTERNATIVES-ALL OF WHICH HAVE FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, COME TO NAUGHT. WE WILL DESCRIBE THESE PROBLEMS IN ABUNDANT AND TEARFUL DETAIL WHEN THE INSPECTORS ARE HERE. THE DEPARTMENT AND THE EMBASSY HAVE BEEN AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE IN ALL OUR EFFORTS TO DATE AND LONG-TERM SOLUTION WILL DOUBTLESS EMERGE AT SOME FUTURE POINT. SUFFICE IT TO SAY FOR NOW, HOWEVER THAT THE SUBSTANTIAL PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT EXPENDED SO FAR IN THIS FRUSTRATING EXERCISE HAS DEFLECTED ATTENTION FROM WORK IN OTHER AREAS AND HAS DONE LITTLE FOR STAFF MORALE.

OUR SECOND "HIGH-RELIEF" PROBLEM HAS BEEN THE DEPARTMENT'S INABILITY TO REPLACE THE FSS SECRETARY-COMMUNICATOR WHO LEFT THE POST IN EARLY DECEMBER 1977. THE EUROPEAN BUREAU HAS MOST HELPFULLY SENT TDY "ROVING" SECRETARIES TO COVER ABOUT 40PERCENT OF THIS ASSIGNMENTS GAP, BUT SUCH STAGGERED PERSONNEL AVAILABILITY HAS PLACED ADDED BURDENS ON US ALL, PARTICULARLY AT A TIME OF HEIGHTENED POLITICAL AND SECURITY CONCERN IN ITALY. WE UNDERSTAND (STATE 98742) THAT THIS PROBLEM WILL BE SOLVED BY END-JUNE 1978. WE ALL DEARLY HOPE SO. COLLINS

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